

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

March 6, 2023

Ranbir Mangat Bains, Ph.D, APRN; CPNP

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Barnard Environmental Magnet School Based Health Center

New Haven, CT

Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Somers, Representative Klarides-Ditria and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Ranbir M. Bains and I am a pediatric nurse practitioner at Barnard School Based Health Center (SBHC), Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven. My SBHC site offers comprehensive medical and mental health care to almost 500 students.

I come before you today to testify about SB 1161: An Act Concerning the Recommendation of School Based Health Center Expansion Working Group

School Based Health Centers play an important role in the health and wellness of the students they serve. Accessing timely healthcare for children and adolescents is essential for them to attain their full potential. Unmet or forgone healthcare in childhood and adolescence leads to loss of educational time, which potentially affects educational achievements and lifetime financial outcomes.

Having access to a SBHC reduces barriers to medical and mental healthcare. Parents can avoid taking time off work to seek care for their children. Students avoid missing essential educational time and school days. A well-educated workforce is critical for our state to thrive. SBHCs are ensuring that students remain healthy, in school and attain their full potential to be successful members of their communities.

I ask the Public Health Committee to please consider, not only moving this raised bill forward, but to also consider expanding this grant opportunity to include all districts interested in opening a SBHC; expanding services to include medical, mental, and/or dental health; and expansion of staffing and hours of operations. The Expansion Workgroup document is a guide and should be used as such. But need is need and should a district be able, through the RFP process, to provide the data to show there is a need, they should not be excluded from this funding opportunity.

This bill will allow school-based health center sites to offer supports for young people who can then continue to thrive and remain in school. It is critical to their future. Thank you for supporting School Based Health Centers.

Respectfully submitted,

Ranbir Mangat Bains, Ph.D, APRN